

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6948

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL QUEBEC UNN

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VIENNA FOR IAEA

EO 11652 NA

TAGS PFOR OVIP ENRG CA FR

SUBJ PONIATOWSKI VISIT TO CANADA, JULY 3-8

REF SEOUL 5171

BEGIN SUMMARY:

EMBOFF'S DISCUSSION JULY 10 WITH ANDRE POTVIN, DIRECTOR,
WEST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, DEPT. OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CON-
FIRMED EMBASSY'S EARLIER GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT GOC
HIGHLY SATISFIED BY RESULTS OF RECENT (JULY 3-8) VISIT
OF FRENCH MINISTER OF STATE AND INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI.
BOTH SUBSTANTIVE TALKS ON RANGE OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
AND LACK OF ATMOSPHERICS ON THE FRANCE/QUEBEC ISSUE COULD
APPARENTLY HARDLY HAVE GONE BETTER FROM GOC POINT OF VIEW.

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CONTRAST TO THE HULLABALOO OF 1967 DEGAULLE VISIT UNDER-
SCORED IN MEDIA AND NOTED WITH SATISFACTION BY POTVIN,

WHO HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR THE ADROITNESS AND DIPLOMATIC SKILLS OF PONIATOWSKI. VISIT SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT CANADIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1967. VISIT CAPPED BY ANNOUNCEMENT FRENCH PRESIDENT WILL VISIT CANADA LATE 1976 OR EARLY 1977. ONLY APPARENT DIFFERENCE WAS OVER POSSIBLE SALE OF NUCLEAR REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT TO KOREA, WHICH WAS PUBLICLY CONFIRMED BY FONMIN MACEACHEN BUT DENIED BY PONIATOWSKI. END SUMMARY.

1. POTVIN VERY HIGH ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE "THREE GOVERNMENTS" (CANADA, FRANCE & QUEBEC) SKIRTED THE POTENTIAL FOR A REPLAY OF 1967. QUEBEC PORTION OF VISIT HAD BEEN, WE UNDERSTOOD, HANDLED IN NOTICEABLY LOW-KEY MANNER, AND POTVIN EXPLAINED WITH A SMILE THAT THIS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE PONIATOWSKI AFTER ALL NOT A HEAD OF STATE. HE ADDED THAT EXPANSION OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES HAD BEEN IMPORTANT RESULT OF VISIT. MOST OF THESE NATURALLY TO BE IN CONTEXT OF FRANCE/QUEBEC, BUT POTVIN EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF FACT THAT SOME TO BE IN OTHER CANADIAN PROVINCES. HE NOTED THAT SECSTATE FOR EXTAFF MACEACHEN HAD MADE THROWAWAY PITCH FOR HIS HOME PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA WITH QUIP THAT PONIATOWSKI SHOULD REMEMBER THE ACADIANS.

2. POTVIN CONFIRMED EARLIER MEDIA REPORTS THAT PONIATOWSKI HAD RAISED FRENCH INTEREST IN SECURING ENRICHED URANIUM VIA JAMES BAY PROJECT AND THAT HE HAD SAID FRANCE WANTS A YES OR NO ON THIS IN THE NEXT SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS. PONIATOWSKI MENTIONED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE WAS MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A YES ANSWER AFTER HIS TALKS WITH CANADIAN OFFICIALS. PM TRUDEAU AT JULY 10 PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION PERIOD EXPLAINED THAT OPTIMISM BASED ON RESULTS OF PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDIES WHICH INDICATE THAT CASE AGAINST PROJECT NOT AS CLEAR-CUT AS OPPONENTS HAD MADE OUT.

3. PONIATOWSKI ACKNOWLEDGED DURING VISIT FRENCH SUPPORT FOR CONCEPT OF "CONTRACTUAL LINK" BETWEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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CANADA AND EC. POTVIN NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THIS DRAMATIC REVERSAL OF FRENCH POSITION SHOULD HAVE BEEN PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, SINCE RECENT EC MINISTERIAL COUNCIL VOTE APPROVING NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED AS UNANIMOUS, PRESS HAD FAILED TO NOTE THAT THIS MEANT FRANCE HAD NOW JOINED WITH OTHER EC COUNTRIES ON ISSUE. GOC THEREFORE DELIGHTED WITH PONIATOWSKI'S PUBLIC AFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR CONTRACTUAL LINK.

4. POTVIN SAID GOC HAD INVITED PONIATOWSKI IN ORDER

TO "MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM" OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN STIMULUS DURING 1974 TRUDEAU VISIT TO FRANCE. GOC ESPECIALLY PLEASED BY NEWS BROUGHT BY PONIATOWSKI THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING WOULD BE VISITING CANADA IN FALL OF 1976 OR SPRING OF 1977. WHEN TRUDEAU HAD BROACHED SUBJECT WITH GISCARD, LATTER HAD SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO VISITING CANADA SOMETIME DURING HIS SEVEN-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE, LEAVING GOC WITH IMPRESSION THAT IT WOULD BE TOWARDS END. GOC GRATIFIED THAT FRANCE, BY EARLY SCHEDULING OF GISCARD'S VISIT, SHARES CANADIAN DESIRE TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM OF DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP.

5. ONLY POSSIBLE JARRING NOTE OF VISIT WAS IN RELATION TO FRENCH SALE OF PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT TO KOREA. MATTER HAD BEEN HOT ITEM IN EARLIER PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES WITH OPPOSITION MEMBERS EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY THAT FRENCH SALES OF THIS EQUIPMENT, TOGETHER WITH PROPOSED CANADIAN SALES OF CANDU NUCLEAR REACTORS, COULD GIVE THESE COUNTRIES NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY. IN ANSWER TO JULY 8 PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTION WHETHER FRANCE INTENDED TO SELL PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT TO SOUTH KOREA AND ARGENTINA, PONIATOWSKI REPLIED WITH FLAT "NO." ON JULY 9 SECSTATE MACEACHEN, APPARENTLY UNAWARE OF PONIATOWSKI'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT, TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD INFORMED CANADIAN EMBASSY SEOUL THAT KOREA DOES INTEND TO BUY PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT FROM FRANCE. ROK FOREIGN MINISTER HAD INFORMED GOC THAT KOREAN REPROCESSING FACILITY WOULD BE "ON A RESEARCH SCALE DESIGNED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO ESTABLISH TECHNICAL CAPABILITY FOR REPROCESSING SPENT FUEL" AND THAT "KOREA DOES NOT PLAN TO PROCESS SPENT FUEL FROM THE CANDU REACTOR" IN ITS REPROCESSING FACILITY. IN VIEW OF INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN ROK AND PONIATOWSKI STATEMENTS, POTVIN SAID EXTAFF HAD ASKED CANADIAN EMBASSY PARIS TO SEEK CLARIFICATION.

6. IN SUM, VISIT WAS, ACCORDING TO POTVIN, BOTH SUCCESSFUL AND SIGNIFICANT IN EYES OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. CANADIANS CLEARLY LOOKING ON UPCOMING VISIT OF GISCARD D'ESTAING AS CAPSTONE TO REBUILDING OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES.
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